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ABSTRACT

This study determined selected characteristics of 958 students enrolled in the Extramural Teaching Program conducted by the Continuing Education Division of Louisiana State University. Data were gathered through a pretested questionnaire administered to the students by the instructors of 83 courses. Frequency distributions of the results yielded the following interpretations: a) the Extramural Teaching Program is serving an educational need for a large number of people from many areas in Louisiana; b) the ages of the students should be considered when developing curriculum for extramural programs; c) the majority of the students in this program are goal oriented; d) some students drive several miles to participate in courses, but convenience seems to be a factor in course offerings; 3) consideration should be given to expanding the program for professional people outside the field of education; f) the quality of the courses offered in the program is good; g) very few of the participants make use of library facilities; h) consideration should be given to a more effective system of announcing courses; and i) financial support for the program should be expanded. (BRB)

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A PROFILE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR CREDIT IN THE EXTRAMURAL TEACHING PROGRAM AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SPRING SEMESTER, 1973

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A summary of an M.S. thesis in Extension Education prepared under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Flint, Louisiana State University, August, 1973

A copy of the complete thesis is on file in the main Library at Louisiana State University.

R & T--Summary No. 48

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine selected characteristics of students enrolled in the Extramural Teaching Program conducted by the Continuing Education Division of Louisiana State University. It was felt that this information would be useful in planning future programs and course offerings.

Methodology

All persons enrolled for credit in courses offered through the Extramural Teaching Program during the spring semester of 1973 constituted the population for the study. Information was obtained by use of a pre-tested questionnaire that was administered by the instructor of each course. A total of eighty-five classes were held during the spring semester of 1973, and responses were gathered from all but two of these.

Data was collected from 958 students which represented 95 per cent of the potential. For all practical purposes the sample was considered to be the population and the only statistical procedures used were frequency distributions.

Conclusions

The following conclusions represent the author's interpretation of the findings:

1. The Extramural Teaching Program of Louisiana State University is apparently serving an educational need for a large number of people in the State and is reaching people from most of the areas of the State. This is significant when one considers the fact that other universities in the State are also offering extramural courses.

2. Age is an important factor to consider in developing courses and curriculums for an extramural program. The majority of the students were

between the ages of 26 and 45, which means that most of them are mature, have family responsibilities, and are employed and pursuing a career. Although some students were working toward a degree, most of them already had a degree. This indicates that they feel a need for participating in continuing education.

3. The majority of the students participating in continuing education are goal oriented. Salary increases and promotions seem to be prime motives for participation. However, it should be pointed out that these are not the only motives. As age increases, persons tend to be motivated more by desire for knowledge, a new experience, and the social aspect of participating in educational programs.

4. Although some students drive several miles to participate in courses, convenience seems to be a factor in course offerings. The majority of the students drove less than fifteen miles round trip to participate. However, most courses are offered in population centers of the State. If the program is expanded, some consideration might be given to ways to reach the more remote areas of the State.

5. The present program is heavily oriented toward the field of education, and the majority of participants are teachers and school administrators. Some consideration should be given to expanding course offerings that meet the needs of people in other professions, especially since present society is characterized by rapidity of change and dominance of technology.

6. Generally, the quality of courses offered through the extramural program is good. This perhaps to some extent accounts for the continuous increase in participation. It also means that instructors offer the same high

quality of courses off campus as they do on campus.

7. One disadvantage of the extramural program could be library facilities. Very few students enrolled in extramural courses make use of library facilities. This could be due to some extent to the fact that students commute and in other instances to the fact that facilities are inadequate. Some consideration needs to be given to ways to improve student use of library facilities.

8. More consideration should be given to developing a better system of announcing course offerings. At present, most courses are offered on a request basis, and potential students receive information largely by word of mouth.

9. In order for the extramural teaching program to be expanded to better meet the needs of the people of the State, additional financial support will be necessary. The program is largely financed by self-generating funds; and in most instances, these are inadequate to operate the program.